

# GAO@100 Highlights

Highlights of [GAO-21-546](#), a report to congressional committees

## Why GAO Did This Study

GAO and DODIG reports on overseas U.S. military operations have highlighted TIP among foreign workers employed on contracts. Congress included a provision in the conference report for the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2020 for GAO to review DOD's efforts to combat TIP related to contracts. This report examines, among other things: the extent to which selected DOD components have implemented oversight and training requirements for CTIP in contracts and the extent to which selected DOD components have tracked and reported investigations of TIP incidents in contracts from fiscal years 2015 through 2020. GAO analyzed federal laws, and DOD guidance, regulations, contracts, and data related to CTIP. GAO also interviewed DOD officials, including Army and Navy officials responsible for overseeing contracts in U.S. Southern Command.

## What GAO Recommends

GAO is making six recommendations to improve DOD oversight of contractors' CTIP efforts and reporting of TIP in contracts: two to strengthen guidance on oversight, one to reinstate requirements on reporting the percentage of people trained, and three to clarify guidance for reporting on TIP investigations. DOD concurred with all of the recommendations.

View [GAO-21-546](#). For more information, contact Latesha Love at 202-512-4409 or [Lovel@gao.gov](mailto:Lovel@gao.gov).

August 2021

## HUMAN TRAFFICKING

### DOD Should Address Weaknesses in Oversight of Contractors and Reporting of Investigations Related to Contracts

## What GAO Found

The U.S. government has a zero tolerance policy for human trafficking, as established in a presidential directive, but trafficking in persons (TIP) of foreign workers on U.S. government contracts overseas persists. Selected Department of Defense (DOD) components have conducted limited oversight of contractors and not met combating trafficking in persons (CTIP) training requirements for contracts. Twelve of 14 Army and Navy contracting officers and contracting officer representatives (CORs) GAO spoke with said they were not aware of their CTIP oversight responsibilities, as set forth in CTIP guidance. DOD requires CORs to conduct contract oversight, but does not say how they should do so. Moreover, nine of 14 individuals said they took a CTIP training other than the required training for acquisition professionals. DOD CTIP guidance, as of fiscal year 2018, also no longer requires components to report the number or percentage of personnel trained, which may limit DOD's awareness about whether acquisition professionals have taken their required training. Until DOD provides guidance to explain how contracting personnel should oversee contractor CTIP compliance and ensures they take the correct training, contracting personnel may continue to be unaware of their CTIP responsibilities.

#### Department of Defense (DOD) Combatting Trafficking in Persons Awareness Poster



Source: DOD. | GAO-21-546

The Army, the Navy, and DOD's Office of Inspector General (DODIG) have systems for tracking investigations of TIP incidents, but the Army and DODIG did not report all TIP violations and investigations in contracts in annual self-assessments, as required by DOD guidance. For example, the Army and DODIG had incomplete reporting of closed TIP investigations in their annual reporting from fiscal years 2015 through 2020. Without complete reporting, DOD leadership lacks full information on TIP investigations. GAO also found that two investigations led to DOD taking action against the contractors, but the Army contracting officers did not report them as TIP violations in a federal database, as required. DOD guidance and federal regulations have different requirements for who is responsible for this reporting, and the Army has not developed clarifying guidance. Without accurate reporting of actions taken against contractors in this database, contracting officers will lack complete information when making future award decisions involving contractors that engaged in TIP.